



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration
Rockville MD 20857

SEP 24 1999 5906 '99 SEP 27 P134

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-1314

Dear Mr. Hastert:

Thank you for your inquiry of September 24, 1999, on behalf of several of your constituents, regarding dietary supplements containing ephedrine alkaloids. Ephedrine alkaloids are amphetamine-like compounds with potentially strong stimulant effects on the cardiovascular (heart and blood vessels) and nervous systems. The ephedrine alkaloids in dietary supplements are naturally occurring stimulants and usually are derived from one of several species of herbs of the genus Ephedra, sometimes called Ma huang or Chinese Ephedra.

On June 4, 1997, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA or the Agency) published a proposed rule in the Federal Register regarding the formulation and labeling of dietary supplements containing ephedrine alkaloids. In the proposed rule, the Agency is proposing:

- to make a finding, which will have the force and effect of law, that a dietary supplement is adulterated if it contains 8 milligrams (mg) or more of ephedrine alkaloids per serving, or if its labeling suggests or recommends conditions of use that would result in intake of 8 mg or more in a 6-hour period or a total daily intake of 24 mg or more of ephedrine alkaloids;
- to require that the label of dietary supplements that contain ephedrine alkaloids state, "Do not use this product for more than 7 days";
- to prohibit the use of ephedrine alkaloids with ingredients, or with ingredients that contain substances, that have a known stimulant effect (e.g., sources of caffeine or yohimbine), which may interact with ephedrine alkaloids;

95N-0304

LET45 /ANS

- to prohibit labeling claims that require long-term intake to achieve the purported effect (e.g., weight loss and body building);
- to require a statement in conjunction with claims that encourage short-term excessive intake to enhance the purported effect (e.g., energy) that, "Taking more than the recommended serving may result in heart attack, stroke, seizure or death"; and
- to require specific warning statements to appear on product labels.

The proposal also articulates FDA's policy that products marketed as alternatives to illicit street drugs are drugs, not dietary supplements.

FDA proposed this rule in response to serious illnesses and injuries associated with the use of dietary supplement products, which contain ephedrine alkaloids and in response to the Agency's investigations and analyses of these illnesses and injuries. Reported adverse events range from episodes of high blood pressure, irregularities in heart rate, insomnia, nervousness, tremors, and headaches, to seizures, strokes, and death. As of January 1997, FDA had received over 800 reports of adverse events associated with the use of more than 100 different dietary supplement products which contained, or were suspected of containing, ephedrine alkaloids. The adverse events reports showed consistent patterns of illness and injury among otherwise healthy individuals and those with underlying diseases or conditions. FDA continues to receive additional reports of adverse events associated with the use of these products.

The proposed measures were developed based on FDA's review of its adverse event reports, the scientific literature, and public comments reviewed by the Agency, including comments generated by an October 1995 advisory working group public meeting and an August 1996 public meeting of FDA's Food Advisory Committee. These experts suggested a number of steps the Agency might take to reduce injuries associated with the

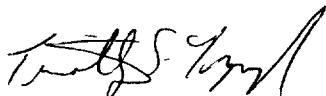
Page 3 - The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert

use of dietary supplements containing ephedrine alkaloids. If implemented, the proposed rule will reduce the risk of adverse events for consumers who use these products.

There was an initial 75-day comment period on the proposed rule. On September 18, 1997 (62 FR 48968), that comment period was reopened for an additional 75 days until December 2, 1997. Your comments have been forwarded to the Administrative Docket for this issue. While the Agency is under no legal obligation to consider comments received after the comment period has closed, we do try to accommodate all comments as time and resources permit. Currently, the Agency is considering all comments, data, and other information it has received in developing a final rule.

We trust this information responds to your concerns. If we may be of any further assistance, please contact us again.

Sincerely,


for Melinda K. Plaisier
Interim Associate Commissioner
for Legislation

cc: Dockets Management Branch
(Docket #95N-0304)

J. DENNIS HASTER
14TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

THE SPEAKER

RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1314
(202) 225-2976

dhastert@mail.house.gov
www.house.gov/hastert



27 NORTH RIVER STREET
BATAVIA, IL 60510
(630) 406-1114

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1314

Office of Congressman J. Dennis Hastert

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: PAT / KAREN

FROM: Michelle

FAX #: 301-443-5897

COMMENTS:

Per our telephone call. I hope this fax is readable.
Thanks.

PAGES INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 2

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This facsimile communication is confidential and intended only for the use of the addressee(s) named above. If you are not the intended recipient of this facsimile, you are hereby notified that the unauthorized interception, use, reproduction or disclosure of this communication may be in violation of the Rules of the House of Representatives and provisions of the United States Code and may lead to criminal prosecution, suit for invasion of privacy, or in the case of a Member, Officer or employee of the House of Representatives, discipline by the House. If you have received this facsimile in error, please immediately notify the sender and return the original facsimile to the above address via the U S Postal Service.

Rep J Dennis Hastert
2263 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone 202-225-2976
Fax 202-225-0697

99-6140

T-704 P.01/02 F-141

Sep-24-99 10:23am From-

Dear Representative C. Dennis Hastert
 I need your help! The FDA has proposed rule (62FED-REG-00678) that restricts all dietary supplements containing naturally occurring ephedrine alkaloids. This rule subverts in the name of Ma Huang. This allegedly proposed regulation would severely limit the level of ephedrine found in Ma Huang dietary supplements to a level that renders them useless as a weight loss aid and other products which can be purchased over the counter without a prescription, contain more ephedrine than the FDA's proposed regulation for dietary supplements.

The FDA has based their proposed rule on false information. What about the millions of Americans who safely and responsibly consume dietary supplements containing Ma Huang each day? Why is the FDA making on restricting my freedoms without any scientific basis or evidence for these restrictions? I strongly believe this rule violates the 1994 Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act, which Congress passed to regulate nutritious and unnecessary actions by the FDA regarding dietary supplements.

I urge you to vote against this and any other unnecessary and illegal action I ask you, as my elected official to protect the integrity of Congress and the people.

Sincerely,
 Signature

Name

Address

City

County

Zip Code

IL Kane
 60123 8117